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ABSTRACT

A preliminary study is presented that attempts to define the linguistic needs of minorities in higher education in the State of Massachusetts. In particular, the study focuses on comments and information provided by educators, students, and would-be students, who were interviewed in Spanish and English, in the cities of Lynn, Lawrence, and Lowell, Massachusetts. The study examines the issue of degree attainment in higher education by linguistic minority and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students and the need for statistical data to track this area. An example of assessment/retention rates for native-English-speaking students admitted to the Northeast Consortium of Colleges and Universities is given; the ensuing data are then used as a backdrop to ask and discuss questions concerning the rating system as applied to the linguistic minority pool of applicants. Three ESL program models designed for linguistic minority participation from three community colleges are described, and an argument stressing the need of ESL development studies and academic standards for a degree-granting ESL program is presented. Recommendations are provided. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education) (GLR)

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WHO REQUESTS ESL?

A Preliminary Study on Linguistic Minority Applicants to Community Colleges in Northeastern Massachusetts

Prepared by
Tomas Mario Kalmar

for
The Northeast Consortium of Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts

September 14, 1988

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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September 14, 1988

TO: NECCUM Council of Presidents

FROM: Tomas Mario Kalmar

RE: WHO REQUESTS ESL?

This Preliminary Study is a draft, presented for immediate review by you and your staff. It reflects the comments and information provided by educators, students, and would-be students interviewed (in Spanish and English) in Lynn, Lawrence and Lowell during this past August and early September.

The background to the study is NECCUM's long-standing commitment to meet more effectively the higher education needs of Linguistic Minority students. The recommendations made this Spring by the Linguistic Minority Task Force of the Lawrence Literacy Coalition have also been taken into account.

As requested, the focus of this preliminary study is on quantitative or, at least, qualitative answers to the controlling question "Who requests ESL?" But it immediately becomes clear that 'ESL' is a catch-all term that unfortunately obscures rather than clarifies the many tangled issues raised by increased Linguistic Minority participation in higher education. I have therefore tried to provide a context for the diverse answers I received to the controlling question, while keeping withing manageable bounds the host of interrelated issues -- with what success is for you and your staff to judge.

I have tried to dig below the surface, and to help each 'side' hear what the other 'side' is saying across the language barrier. It may seem regrettable to speak of 'sides'. But the language barrier that separates the mainstream from the linguistic minorities in Lynn, Lawrence and Lowell is surely a two-way barrier. Nourishing a serious mutual dialogue between languages is a key to lowering the barrier. Intelligent bilingual adults, who can communicate on both sides of the barrier, have expressed their eagerness to facilitate this much needed two-way dialogue. If the only door through which these potential bridge-builders can walk to offer their services to higher education is the door marked 'ESL', the two-way dialogue is unnecessarily aborted.

If this preliminary study reaches a firm conclusion, it is quite a simple idea: let the existing bridge (called 'ESL') be strengthened and widened, but let there also be as many other bridges and doorways open to Linguistic Minority applicants as there are to mainstream applicants. When Linguistic Minorities participate in the design and delivery of *academic, developmental* and *community service* programs, 'ESL' will be appreciated by those it is intended to serve, not as a barrier but as truly a bridge to academically valid college credentials.

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Introduction

Substantial participation by Linguistic Minorities in Higher Education cannot possibly mean the quiet assimilation of a hitherto excluded group. It must inexorably lead to at least a give and take between English and other languages. Discourse management is part of the task. Discourse conducted in languages other than English will be managed either by silencing it (under the policy of 'English Only') or else by legitimizing the role of mediators, who negotiate a 'conversion rate' between the relative values of English *vs* other languages.

This preliminary study is offered as a sample of such mediation. Although written in English, it attempts to embody a two-way dialogue between 'Anglos' and 'Hispanics' on the question *Who requests ESL?* The importance of Linguistic Minorities other than Hispanic is not slighted, and 'Anglo' is referred to throughout by the less offensive term 'mainstream'. But at the risk of oversimplification, this preliminary study may be seen as an example of the potential benefit of conducting research in both English *and* the language of a targeted Linguistic Minority population.

In the following pages I write in the first person to remind readers that everything in this report is a first, not the last, word, subject to further discussion, further analysis, further testing. But my use of the first person, will not, I trust, be used to invalidate the contributions made to this study by talented, intelligent Hispanics who have spoken to me (and to each other) in Spanish.

Either mainstream educators will continue telling Linguistic Minorities what they need (usually it's ESL) or else they will make room for Linguistic Minorities to take the floor and speak up freely in their own voice, to contribute valuable intellectual resources to the process of meeting the educational needs not just of Linguistic Minorities but also of the society at large. Either bilingualism will continue to be a stigma or else it will be perceived more clearly as an academic virtue.

Statistics *vs* Hearsay

Accurate, detailed statistical breakdowns are available for the population enrolled in ESL classes at the three Community Colleges. (See Appendix.) This data, however, does not help to answer the question "who *requests* ESL?" It can only answer the question "who *is enrolled* in ESL?" The gap between these two questions is obvious to some people and invisible to others. Perceiving this gap is imperative if we are to progress in lowering the language barriers that exclude Linguistic Minorities from Higher Education.

As soon as you try to translate (e.g. into Spanish) "Who requests ESL?" you become aware of the impossibility of conveying what is meant by this little acronym. "Ingles como segundo idioma" is nothing but a mechanical translation, word by word, of technical jargon, educationese. No one acutally requests "ingles como segundo idioma" (or the equivalent in other languages). They want to learn English, period. Not English as a Second Language but English as an Academic Discipline (EAD). Or they want to manage their bilingual discourse more efficiently, to sharpen their interpreting skills so as to serve their friends and family, and to be less dependent on their talented bilingual children (BDM, Bilingual Discourse Managment). Or they want to get a job, English as a Marketable Skill (EMS). Or they just want to chat with their neighbors -- English as a Means of Communication (EMC). And so on.

Frankly, there is also said to be a group that requests not ESL but Financial Assistance: in order to be eligible, they must demonstrate a need for ESL, a condition which they can easily meet. At the risk of maybe causing offense, this group could be said to request English as a Last Resort (ELR). Almost any ESL teacher can testify to the effect that this group has on the rest of the program.

I invent these other acronyms, EAD, BDM, EMS, EMC, ELR, simply to hammer home the point that ESL is an untranslatable acronym, and that it is therefore unlikely to name what Linguistic Minority applicants are really *requesting*. To put it bluntly, ESL is a term coined, to name a system constructed, not by Linguistic Minorities to meet their own needs, but by dedicated professional educators to meet the needs of an excluded group. It's the old question of who needs what *according to whom*. "You *request* X, but what you *need* is ESL." There is nothing wrong with this, as long as we see it for what it is.

I realize that the above train of thought seems like a trivial, semantic quibble to some people, mere word-play. Yet to others, it seems to demystify the source of much frustration and friction.

The Need for Statistical Analysis

Almost everyone who cares about linguistic minority issues expresses thoughtful opinions, whether or not these opinions are backed by a college degree. But since the opinions expressed by one person or group are often hotly contested by another, it would certainly be helpful to have statistics at hand which could resolve the question. There is clearly a need for sound, statistical reasoning to help us distinguish between opinions and facts.

Unfortunately, some of the most crucial, statistical data is difficult, or even impossible, to collect. For example:

* What percentage of those who earn a Certificate (or Associate Degree) come from Linguistic Minorities?

* What percentage of ESL students make it all the way to a Certificate or Associate Degree?

I have not succeeded in getting quantitative answers to questions like these. The current system is not designed to keep track of students in this way. The consensus is that the answer to both the above questions is "Very few". But of course, it would be a serious fallacy to treat a small percentage as *statistically insignificant*. On the contrary, information on a group that is more than two standard deviations from the norm could prove very significant. For example, in-depth interviews with students who made it all the way through from entry into 'low-level' ESL to exit with a Certificate, an Associate Degree or a successful transfer could help us understand the factors that promote success.

Along the same lines, it is, in practice, impossible to ascertain what percentage of the Linguistic Minority population at large refrain from applying to a Community College not because they are *under*prepared but because they are *over*prepared. Even if this unknown percentage is small, its statistical significance may be great. I have certainly had instructive conversations with immigrants who could not continue their professional practice in Massachusetts because, as one of them put it, "You can solve differential equations, but that doesn't count if you speak English with a thick accent," or as another one said, "I was a successful doctor in my own country but here I'm lucky to earn $15.00 an hour as a medical interpreter." What percentage of the Linguistic Minority population falls into this category? A quantitative answer to this question would help us evaluate the claim made by this very group that Linguistic Minorities should be seen as an untapped resource, and not only as a bottomless pit of problems. For lack of statistical data, we must make do with anecdotal material, exemplified by the woman who told me "They think that if they admit people like us they would be *lowering* their standards -- why can't they see that until they *raise* their standards they won't appreciate what we have to offer?"

This is probably the best place to mention a second group, just 'under' the category of professionals who feel prevented from contributing to Higher Education. This second group could be nicknamed the 'would-be professionals'. They are the group who advocated, through the Lawrence Literacy Coalition, the provision of college-level courses taught in Spanish, or at least in a mixture of Spanish and English (as is the practice at Roxbury Community College and many colleges in New York City -- to which a significant percentage of these 'would-be professionals' end up going).

Those who want to study college level subjects in a language other than English cannot be served under an "English Only" policy. Now, "English Only" is not, as far as I know, the offically articulated language policy of public Higher Education in Massachusetts. Indeed, there seems to be no official language policy at the individual College level, at the NECCUM level, or at the Board of Regents level. But in the absence of an officially declared policy, "English Only" is certainly perceived as the *de facto* principle that governs practice. And yet, I believe we would be missing the point if we assumed that "English Only" is what this second group (of would-be professionals) is objecting to. The barrier that this group is hoping to lower is not the "English Only" barrier so much as the "*ESL* Only" barrier. The prospect of studying nothing but ESL for two or more years dismays them, since they want to progress towards a professional career, and they argue that they could be studying math and even, say, social studies, at the same time as they study ESL, if only these college subjects were introduced in Spanish.

Now the statistical question is: How large is this second group? Quantitative answers have so far eluded me, but the work I did as Co-ordinator of the Lawrence Literacy Coalition this year convinces me that any college that meets this group's request by conducting, in Spanish, Lower Division courses in Lawrence (for full academic credit) will be swamped by talented, academically-minded students. And of course the same goes for Lowell and Lynn.

Assessment/Retention Rates: An Example

Let us now consider, in the light of the above observations, a concrete example of helpful statistical data. Students admitted to NECC can be grouped as follows:

A: Of those who are accepted, 85% are assessed. Assessment is voluntary at NECC, and 15% of those admitted decline the assessment process.

B: Of those who are assessed, 70% follow the advice given concerning placement. 30% decline the advice.

C: Of those who follow advice based on assessment, 63% are retained.

D: Of those who decline advice given, 25% are retained.

(For further details, see Appendix, *Fact Sheet on Assessment Results and Planned Placements*, kindly provided by Dr. David Kelley, Chairperson, Division of Instructional Development, NECC.)

This kind of statistical analysis serves to validate the excellent assessment/placement process offered by NECC to mainstream applicants. Note that there is (D +) a small group (about 6%) who are assessed, do not follow advice, but are retained, and (E ?) a small, unknown group who are not assessed but who are retained. As mentioned above, it would be fallacious to ignore the *statistical* significance of these two small groups, more than two standard deviations from the norm.

Now I propose to turn this data over and ask some tough questions concerning Linguistic Minority applicants. The above rates obtain for mainstream students, specifically *excluding ESL students*. This poses the following questions:

A: Do 15% of Linguistic Minority applicants decline to be assessed?

B: Do 30% of Linguistic Minority students who are assessed decline the placement planned for them?

C: Are 63% of Linguistic Minority students who follow advice retained?

D: Are (say) 6% of Linguistic Minority students who decline advice retained?

[E: Is there a small percentage of Linguistic Minority students who are not assessed but who are retained?]

The discussions I have had in connection with this present study convince me that straight answers to questions like these would be very helpful indeed (of course, for NSCC/Lynn and MCC/Lowell as well as for NECC/Lawrence), since we would then know whether Linguistic Minority applicants are being placed with the same success rate as mainstream students. The formula cited above -- "You *request* X, but what you *need* is Y (= ESL)" -- would then be fully warranted.

I have not, however, succeeded in getting quantitative answers to the above five questions with respect to the Linguistic Minority pool of applicants. In the meantime, pending further research, the answers I have gathered are more or less as follows:

A: At NECC assessment is still voluntary for the mainstream population but is, in practice, mandatory for Linguistic Minority applicants.

B: Once enrolled in ESL classes, very few (if any) Linguistic Minority students can exercise the option to follow a course of study not consistent with the plan.

C: There seems to be no statistical data showing what percentage of ESL students eventually earn a Certificate, an Associate Degree, or successful transfer. Since many ESL students enroll through NECC/LEEP seeking personal satisfaction or job placement, rather than (eventual) academic credentials, there seems to be a double standard, or at least a separate criterion, for measuring the success rate of Linguistic Minority placement procedures. (See next section, on "community service" *vs* "developmental studies" models.) Still, it would be good to know whether the success rate -- whatever appropriate criterion is used -- for Linguistic Minorities who 'follow advice' is as high as that for mainstream students: 63%. (And note the 83% success rate for Special Services).

D: Suppose that some Linguistic Minority applicants decline advice based on assessment, for the same reasons that mainstream students do, whatever reasons they may be. It would be valuable to know whether 25% of Linguistic Minority students who decline guidance would succeed, on a par with the mainstream (control) group -- or whether the success rate would be lower, *or higher*. But we cannot know this until they are given the same range of choice.

E: I have heard tell of a handful of individuals who try to "pass" for mainstream, walking through the front door, as it were, just like anyone else, and disguising the fact that English is only one of the languages they know. Their destiny is recorded in oral tradition. Some succeed in "beating the system", some are "caught" and sent back down to ESL. I cite these stories, not to in any way impugn the dedication and professional expertise of the assessment/placement process, but simply as a reminder that dedicated expertise is not always appreciated by those whom it is intended to serve. Recent high school graduates who were not in TBE but in mainstream classes are often particularly touchy about being told that they need ESL now that they are in college. Those who speak "Spanglish" seem to be the touchiest.

ESL Programs: Three Distinct Models

Each of the three Community Colleges has good reason to be proud of its ESL program. Each campus is about to go through dramatic changes as fas as Linguistic Minority participation is concerned. NSCC's ESL program at Lynn has been patiently built up by a dedicated (and now somewhat isolated) faculty member, only to be virtually dismantled this year because of '03' funding cuts. NECC has one of the oldest and most carefully developed ESL programs in the Commonwealth: it is expected to go through further transformations in the environment of the new Lawrence Campus. MCC's Lowell Campus is just one year old: no Linguistic Minority applicants are turned away, and its innovative ESL program is therefore currently being stretched to new limits.

To some extent, each college has developed its own in-house jargon to talk about Linguistic Minority issues. No two colleges are necessarily talking about quite the same thing. 'ESL' means different things not only to different applicants, but also to different educators. This thickens the plot and adds to the confusion.

In particular, for some educators, ESL is a *community service*, comparable to, say, Yoga or Basket Weaving. For others it is a specialized form of

developmental studies, comparable to, say, Basic Math. And for others, it is an *academic discipline*, comparable to, say, Computer Programming.

It follows that when we ask "Who requests ESL?" we must take into account the wide range of meanings which 'ESL' has, not only for applicants, but also for college personnel. A number of educators have (independently) pointed out to me that the statistical questions A--E posed above (p. 5) make sense if and only if applied to ESL-as-Developmental-Studies. But where ESL is essentially a *community service*, it does more harm than good to use *developmental studies* criteria as a proposed basis for measuring success rates. (The type of class offered, not the funding source, is the issue here. Many regard the NECC's ESL courses offered at Lawrence as a community service, whatever the Division under which they are administered.)

If I was confusing two distinct criteria for success, so too -- I dare say -- are many of the Linguistic Minority applicants placed in ESL programs. A mismatch between the type of ESL *requested* and the type *offered* can only compound the problems endemic in any multi-level ESL program. We confuse students (and, perhaps, ourselves) if we fail to explain clearly, to the students *and* to ourselves, the distinction between *type* and *level*. A student who progresses from a 'low' to a 'high' level of ESL has not necessarily transferred from a *community service* model to an *academic credit* model. In fact, under the current system students may 'graduate' from the highest ESL level offered only to find that they are finally eligible, not for full academic credit, but for *developmental studies*! This may explain why so many Linguistic Minority would-be applicants perceive ESL not as a bridge but as a barrier. It may also explain one of the major complaints voiced by the ESL teachers: their classes are not just multi-level, but also mixed type.

Almost anyone who has taught in ESL programs is familiar with the unavoidably multi-level composition of a given class-room, no matter what assessment criterion is used to place students in distinct levels. A beginner who cannot converse in simple English turns out to be reading advanced engineering texts in English. A student who can argue at length in spoken English (with scarcely any foreign accent) turns out to be unable to read 'even in their own language'. (See Fulano de Tal, "Even in My Own Tongue", Working Paper 2, Lawrence Literacy Coalition, March 28 1988. Reprinted in *Conections*, 3, Adult Literacy Resource Institute, Boston 1989.) Imaginative teachers turn this diversity into a resource, though headaches and frustrations remain.

Years of experience have convinced me that the problem of the multi-level classroom cannot be completely solved. But the mixed-type problem identified by Community College ESL teachers probably can be resolved, once it is clearly perceived. Why compound the problem by mixing different *types* of students in the same class? In addition to various levels, the teachers (and the students' class-mates) now have to deal with an incompatible mixture of student motivations. So we find the the middle-class electrical engineer eager to earn college credentials sitting side by side with the illiterate *campesina*. The two of them usually get along very well, no doubt, but the friendliness and warm feelings normally found in the support-group atmosphere of a typical ESL class should not be allowed to replace high academic standards as the criterion for success. Either the classwork is too academic for one type, or not academic enough for the other.

A strong case can therefore be made for advocating *the provision of at least three distinct ESL programs at each campus.* This would allow a Linguistic Minority applicant to *choose* the type appropriate to his/her situation and personal objectives. No longer would the Linguistic Minority population be reduced to a monolithic, homogeneous bloc of 'ESL students'. And if each applicant could be told "The success rate for students like you who enter these three programs is so-and-so much percent respectively", then the responsibility for informed decision-making would be returned to the applicant, where it belongs.

ESL as Developmental Studies: The Case of NSCC/Lynn

A relatively pure version of the *developmental studies* type of ESL progam is in force at NSCC/Lynn. Technically, the program could be described as marginal, since it is not institutionalised under a developmental studies Division, and for many years was part of the English Dept. But it functions as a developmental studies program. As suggested above, the rationale for this type of program can be summed up in the formula "You request X but what you need is ESL". This is logical as long as it can be shown that ESL does indeed lead to X; but if ESL is in fact a dead end, a terminal program, the logic breaks down. At NSCC/Lynn only a handful of ESL students have so far succeeded in completing a full course of regular study. Oral tradition preserves their memory but statistical records do not. The College could have engendered positive public relations by celebrating, loud and clear, the success of these pioneers. One hears a lot of talk about the need for "role models", but these anonymous candidates for that role have been allowed to sink into oblivion.

If an ESL program is not in fact integrated into mainstream college programs, if the skills it develops do not lead to success in college, calling it "developmental studies" is, at best, wishful thinking, and, at worst, a cruel hoax.

This year's funding cuts have eliminated the '03' salaries on which NSCC's ESL teachers, alas, depend. The ESL program has been decimated. This fall, of 92 applicants only 15 were admitted. When I asked, at the Lynn campus, "Who requests ESL?" I drew a blank, to put it mildly. Linguistic Minority applicants are being turned away in droves. There is no system in place for keeping track of how many seek admission in vain, let alone of what they *requested*, be it ESL or anything else. Not to mention those who don't bother to apply because they know the score.

I hope that this description proves mistaken. If it is accurate, the situation could hardly be more grave. In effect, Linguistic Minority applicants at Lynn are being told "You request X, but what you need is ESL, but you can't have ESL, so there's nothing here for you." The sensitive issue of potentially serious litigation must be faced. One has only to note what is happening to the public school systems in Lynn, Lawrence and Lowell, add the demographic trends, and the conclusion is inexorable: if the *de facto* exclusion of Lynn's growing Linguistic Minority population from public higher education continues, litigation is not just possible but likely, and not in the distant future.

We cannot tell *all* Linguistic Minority applicants that no matter what they want they must go to the side door marked "ESL Only". We cannot say "Only 15 of you can walk through this little door -- and it doesn't lead to college". Open admissions must, surely, give all applicants a choice, the same range of choices. When alternatives to 'ESL Only' are in place, many of the remaining barriers will be removed. Those who choose to study only ESL will be better served, those who choose other routes may succeed or fail, in greater or lesser percentages than the ESL Only group, or than the mainstream, but the responsibility for choosing will (repeating what I said above) be where it belongs: with each individual applicant.

At Lynn, as at Lawrence and Lowell, a strong case can be made for advocating *both* the expansion and integration of the existing *developmental studies* model of ESL *and* the implementation of a distinct *community service* model as well as an *academic discipline* model (on which, see below).

The Case for Academic Standards

"*Obviously* you can't study at college if your English isn't good enough" is a self-evident axiom to some people; to others it masks an indefensible double standard. Community services and developmental studies do not add up to full participation in higher education. Full participation begins with matriculation and ends with graduation. A separate and unequal system for Linguistic Minority applicants (no matter how well intended) is not enough. Academic integrity is the best antidote to anti-intellectual prejudice against proficiency in 'foreign languages'.

A number of Linguistic Minority intellectuals have argued out with me the case for integrating ESL into a full-fledged academic program, that would grant full academic credit in recognition of the unique strengths of bilingual students. They have urged me to provide the following outline of their case in this report:

"Two years of 15 hrs a week earns you an Associate Degree; two years of 24 hours a week, nothing but ESL, earns us nothing.

"You earn academic credit for dipping your toes into our language, you earn credit for studying 'the forces that shape and affect the behavior of foreign-speaking people'; we earn no credit for total immersion in your language, for mastering the forces that shape and affect your behavior.

"You earn up to 16 credits for reaching a so-called Intermediate level in our language and yet you can barely sustain an intellectually stimulating conversation with us, let alone write learned academic prose; we do not get those 16 credits we deserve for already knowing the language you are studying, we earn no credit until we have passed well beyond an advanced level in your language.

"When you study our language, you talk about it in your own tongue; when we study your language we are 'forbidden' to talk about it, or anything else, in our own tongue.

"When you study our language, you are expected to show that you can translate into it and out of it; when we study your language, translation and interpretation skills are explicitly excluded from the curriculum."

I am certain that the above synopsis will strike some readers as abrasive amd militant; others will see it as unnecessarily exaggerating an admittedly valid point. This is inevitable whenever one is trying to identify an undiagnosed double standard. In defense of the current system we could point out that NSCC, for example, does offer courses intended to give credit to Hispanics for reviewing the basics of Spanish (SP4461/2) -- and certainly many Hispanic students are not, in fact, proficient in Spanish. More to the point, the new ESL program at MCC/Lowell *does* offer up to 6 credit units, in the Humanities, for ESL courses, though admittedly not at the beginning or intermediate level.

In the context of this present, preliminary study I offer my own observations on the issue of double standards *vs* academic integrity. A glance at a community college catalog confirms the validity of the main point: people do not study "Spanish as a Second Language" or "French as a Second Language", they study Spanish or French, period. And they do earn credit not just for basic or intermediate courses, but for various language-related courses such as NSCC's *Spanish for Community Agency and Health Personnel* [SPN 100]. A course which studies how English compares to other languages [*e.g.* NSCC's CMP 132 *The Study of Language*] would certainly profit from the participation of native speakers of those other languages with an intellectual interest in linguistics and philology. In short, whether or not you earn credit for *becoming more bilingual* does depend on whether you start from one end of the bridge or the other. We may not want to admit it, but those who object to a double standard with respect to academic credit do have a case, and certainly deserve a fair hearing.

Excellent progress has been made at MCC/Lowell where the first steps towards full implementation of a truly *academic model* for ESL have already been taken. If each college offered a clearly distinguished *academic* option for qualified Linguistic Minority candidates, the challenge of diagnosing and eliminating double standards could be faced fair and square.

It may seem a bit much to suggest that someone who has studied ESL full time for two years has the right to an Associate Degree. But if the course of study were to focus on a career goal, the value of interpreter skills could be given full academic recognition. Currently it is undeniable that interpreter skills are considered marginal by the ESL professon. But just as someone who masters both American Sign Language and interpreter skills can qualify for NECC's esteemed Interpreter Training Certificate and/or Associate Degree, so someone who demonstrates proficiency in two languages and competence in interpreter skills could well qualify for a Certificate and/or Associate Degree as a Bilingual Interpreter. The Linguistic Minority Task Force of the Lawrence Literacy Coalition stressed the need -- unmet because unrecognised -- for precisely this sort of academic training at all levels. [See "Some Unmet Needs", p. 11 (c), *A Comprehensive Five Year Literacy Plan for the Lower Merrimack Valley,* NECCUM, April 28 1988.] President John Dimitry has affirmed NECC's deep commitment to providing academic programs in interpreter training at the new Lawrence campus.

Recommendations

(The following recommendations cannot be regarded as in any sense exhaustive. On the contrary, it is essential that this Preliminary Study be widely circulated within NECCUM, especially, of course, within the three Community Colleges, to allow key personnel to comment on it, and to review and revise these recommendations.)

* Convene Linguistic Minority Task Forces at the individual College level, and/or at the NECCUM level, and/or at the Board of Regents level, to work on revising and implementing these Recommendations, and especially

    * to represent the interests of all Linguistic Minorities served in a given region
    * to ensure close liaison with all Divisions and with all Academic Committees
    * to formulate an academically-warranted Language Policy
    * to identify and eliminate double standards in the granting of academic credit

* Identify and track all Linguistic Minority students from entry to exit (and beyond) in order to compile detailed, accurate statistical data on Student Profiles, Student Retention, and Academic Effectiveness

* Implement improved Intake and Assessment Procedures to distinguish between distinct types of Linguistic Minority applicants

* Distinguish clearly between *academic*, *community service*, and *developmental* models of ESL programs and offer Linguistic Minority applicants sound guidance in choosing between these three models at each campus

* Strengthen and expand existing *developmental* ESL programs by means of secure, permanent (not '03') State funding

* Monitor academic effectiveness of *developmental* ESL programs by statistically sound matriculation/graduation rates of Linguistic Minority applicants placed in these programs

* Teach sections of major Lower Division courses in the language(s) spoken by the larger Linguistic Minorities served at each campus

* Offer Interpreter Development programs as a career option and as an elective within existing career options

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